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DE RUEHPS #0808/01 2690807
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 260807Z SEP 06
FM USOFFICE PRISTINA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6536
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0852
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
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RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
RUFOANA/USNIC PRISTINA SR

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 PRISTINA 000808

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DREW SCHUFLETOWSKI, USOSCE FOR STEVE STEGER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [UNMIK](#) [YI](#)

SUBJECT: KOSOVO: DAS DICARLO AND EU REP LEHNE BRIEF ON ICO,
REITERATE NEED FOR UNITY

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1. (C) SUMMARY: In Pristina September 12-14, EUR DAS Rosemary DiCarlo and EU rep Stefan Lehne briefed Kosovo Albanian and Serb leaders on the International Civilian Office (ICO) that will be established to supervise implementation of the status settlement. DiCarlo and Lehne underscored that planning for the ICO in no way prejudices the status outcome, but that prudent planning dictates early discussion of the ICO's mandate and authorities. The two also stressed that the ICO would have limited executive powers and would not have the same character or scope as the OHR structure in Bosnia. Meeting with Unity Team (UT) members, DiCarlo and Lehne also pressed for ongoing unity during the next critical phase of the status process and even after status is determined. They also pressed for keeping the focus on Standards and urged the leaders to mount a public affairs campaign to prepare the Kosovo people for the compromises required to complete the status process (e.g., on decentralization). DiCarlo and Lehne made clear that Kosovo would be expected to embrace fully whatever package of proposed arrangements UN Special Envoy Ahtissari eventually presents to them. In a meeting with Kosovo Assembly caucus leaders, DiCarlo and Lehne insisted on the need to enforce party discipline to ensure the Assembly passes whatever implementing legislation is needed for the status package. Later, in a private discussion with the Unity Team, DiCarlo pressed harder on the theme of unity and chastised the leaders for failing to pass a Turkish language amendment to the Law on Languages (a Standards priority). She discouraged useless Kosovar speculation on legal scenarios for concluding the status process, saying UT members must focus instead on those things for which they are primarily responsible: the Standards and preparing the public for the next stages in the status process. UT leaders took this on board, but comments from opposition leader Hashim Thaci suggested that he continues to view the status process and the period beyond through the prism of his own personal ambitions.

2. (C) Summary, cont. DiCarlo and Lehne reassured Serb mayors in northern Kosovo that the international civilian and military presence in Kosovo post-status would protect the

security of Kosovo Serbs and enforce implementation of decentralization provisions. They urged Serb officials to avoid isolating themselves through a counterproductive cutoff of relations with the international community after the status decision. Serb leaders, as expected, deemed independence unacceptable, but spoke at length about the economic/security concerns of their constituents and welcomed continued international involvement. DAS DiCarlo emphasized USG commitment to assist the Serb north and, after the meeting, inaugurated a USAID road improvement project with the mayor of Zvecan. DiCarlo and Lehne discussed security with new COMKFOR LTG Kather, who was confident KFOR could handle contingencies in the north. At a private meeting, SRSR Ruecker told DiCarlo he would carry forward her message to the Unity Team and the Prime Minister on the need to pay greater attention to their responsibilities regarding Standards. END SUMMARY.

ICO and Prudent Planning

13. (C) EUR DAS Rosemary DiCarlo and EU/Solana representative Stefan Lehne, in Pristina September 12-14, held joint meetings with key Kosovo Albanian leaders, including President Sejdiu, members of the Unity Team, and Assembly caucus leaders. During an initial meeting with UT members, DiCarlo and Lehne, along with UNMIK DSRSG Schook, briefed the Unity Team on the tentative shape of the International Civilian Office (ICO) which will be established, per Contact Group directive, to supervise implementation of the status settlement. DiCarlo noted that planning for the ICO did not in any way prejudge the status outcome, but rather was prudent planning.

14. (C) DiCarlo and Lehne explained that the ICO, most likely led by the EU with an American principal deputy, would not have the extensive authority of UNMIK, nor would it administer Kosovo along the model of Bosnia's Office of the

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High Representative; rather, the ICO's executive powers would relate solely to settlement implementation, with a subsidiary EU-led Rule of Law mission retaining some executive authorities in areas of law enforcement and the judiciary. President Sejdiu, speaking for the UT members, said the ICO and the continued presence of KFOR would be welcomed by the citizens of Kosovo, and that he had recently written a letter to Kosovo's international partners to this effect. UT Coordinator Blerim Shala asked about the ICO's role in the divided city of Mitrovica and was told by Lehne that this had not yet been fully determined. At the conclusion of the meeting, Lehne asked that the UT designate a technical team that could start work, in tandem with the EU and UNMIK, on key post-UNMIK transition issues as soon as the end of September. Kosovo Albanian leaders promised to do this, under the leadership of President Sejdiu.

Message to K Albanians: Unity, Flexibility, Education, Acceptance

15. (C) At a subsequent private meeting with the Unity Team, DAS DiCarlo stressed the need for "absolute unity" both before and after the conclusion of final status negotiations; for continued flexibility in negotiations; for a public education campaign that combats extremist speculation, especially on the crucial issue of decentralization; and for discipline on the part of parties and the political elite to accept fully the final settlement package presented by UN Special Envoy Ahtisaari. DiCarlo reiterated the USG's commitment to conclude final status negotiations by the end of the year, circumstances permitting, but noted that the UT and the PISG had much to do to convince the international community of its seriousness.

16. (C) DiCarlo said that the status process is at a critical stage and stressed that the UT would not only need to accept, but to embrace the final package as eventually finalized by

Ahtisaari. She urged these leaders to end unhelpful speculation on endgame status scenarios and focus instead on the work for which they were primarily responsible (NOTE: Speculation and rumors -- most of them not wholly accurate -- are rampant in Pristina about endgame legal scenarios, in particular the precise content of a concluding UN Security Council Resolution. END NOTE.) She also made it crystal clear, in response to Thaci's unsubtle suggestion that unity within the team might hinge on formation of a broad unity government with his prominent participation, that the U.S. would not brook holding the UT hostage to a reshuffling of government arrangements. DiCarlo then asked that the UT develop a media strategy in the next two weeks that would educate the Kosovar public on decentralization and other issues that will be in the final status package; UT leaders agreed to do so. Both DiCarlo and COM expressed disappointment that passage of a Turkish language amendment to the Law on Languages had failed that day in the Assembly, due to infighting within the ruling LDK party. That was exactly the wrong message, they argued, to send to the international community given the overwhelming importance of demonstrating sensitivity to the concerns of ethnic minorities.

17. (C) President Sejdiu pledged continued unity among the team. Thaci agreed, noting that he had met with his party's branch leaders the day before and all had extended full support to the process, including the decentralization proposals. That said, Thaci criticized the Kosovo government for corruption and saw "no obligation" to remain on the team after a passage of a new resolution on Kosovo at the UN Security Council. On the Turkish language amendment, Sejdiu and Assembly Speaker Berisha both regretted its failure, while Thaci and ORA leader Vetton Surroi criticized the LDK, although not Sejdiu and Berisha personally, for not providing more support. (Note: At a meeting the day previous with the four Albanian party caucus leaders in the Assembly, both DiCarlo and COM emphasized the importance of the Assembly role in the coming months, as the final settlement package will require quick and disciplined action on implementing

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legislation. DiCarlo and COM also mentioned specifically the importance of the Turkish amendment and urged its passage, a message that went unheeded by the LDK leadership in the Assembly the next day. End Note.)

Message of Reassurance To/Encouraging Message from Kosovo Serbs

18. (C) Meeting with Kosovo Serb leaders in Pristina and with two Serb mayors in Zvecan, a majority Serb municipality in northern Kosovo, DiCarlo and Lehne reassured them of the international community's commitment to maintain Kosovo's multi-ethnic character. Lehne noted that the Vienna technical talks dealt "90-95 percent" with the interests of the Serb community in Kosovo, particularly on decentralization, while DiCarlo indicated that the continued international civilian/military presence in the north would ensure that Serb rights are protected. She urged them, whatever the final status outcome, not to isolate themselves from the international community.

19. (C) Serb leaders voiced the expected rejection of independence, but, encouragingly, focused more on the everyday concerns of Kosovo Serbs. Moderate leader Oliver Ivanovic discussed the need to prevent violence against Serbs and argued that only the U.S. was credible enough to take the lead on this. Zvecan Mayor Milovic launched into his municipality's problems -- 4,000 IDPs expelled after 1999 and during the March 2004 riots, damaged infrastructure, lack of jobs -- and insisted he could not solve them without international support. Milovic's colleague, the mayor of Zubin Potok, was more emphatic on final status, arguing that Serbs would never accept the new institutions of an independent Kosovo. But even if this came about, he said, he

did not favor "deserting" Kosovo or using violent means to oppose it. Both mayors thanked the USG for financing projects in their respective municipalities. (Note: After the Zvecan meeting, DiCarlo inaugurated a USAID-funded road improvement project and visited a local library that will be expanded to twice its size through USG funding, two in a series of projects that will get underway in September and October in all three northern municipalities and north Mitrovica.)

KFOR Commander Confident

¶10. (C) At a lunch hosted by new KFOR Commander LTG Roland Kather (Germany) in honor of DiCarlo and Lehne, Kather expressed his confidence in KFOR's ability to deal with contingencies, particularly in the north, and noted that he would soon be making his first trip up to that sector. Kather discussed the need to raise the standards of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), particularly at the senior officer level, but was aware of the political sensitivities of discussing a future Kosovo security force. He promised to consult closely with his "political masters" on this and other sensitive issues.

SRSRSG Ruecker and PDSRSG Schook: Transition Planning Moving Forward

¶11. (C) UNMIK SRSRSG Ruecker described for DAS DiCarlo his recent appearance at the UN Security Council session reporting on progress in Kosovo, where Prime Minister Ceku had also been in attendance. Ruecker and PDSRSG Schook were generally upbeat on the post-status transition planning, with Schook noting that a structure had been put in place within UNMIK to guide the process forward. He promised detailed plans within two weeks. (Note: In a joint DiCarlo/Lehne discussion with OSCE head Werner Wnendt, Wnendt also promised full cooperation at an operational level with the incipient International Civilian Office, pointing to a variety of areas where OSCE expertise could continue to be helpful.) Ruecker agreed with DAS DiCarlo that Kosovars needed to get out of the business of speculation on status scenarios and turn their attention fully to the tasks at hand, and promised to carry that same message to the Unity Team and PM Ceku.

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Ruecker, and particularly Schook, evinced some frustration with Ceku's tendency to travel abroad rather than focus on his standards-related responsibilities or use his personal popularity to sell the decentralization package to the Kosovar public.

¶12. (C) COMMENT: DAS DiCarlo's visit afforded the chance to deliver just the pointed message that the Kosovar leadership needs to absorb: they were encouraged to learn that USG determination to proceed with the status process remains unchanged, but they were chastened to hear that we expect them to move immediately to combat public criticism of decentralization and better prepare their public for the many compromises that will be contained in the final status package. We will use the positive momentum generated by DAS DiCarlo's meetings to intensify outreach to the Serb community and to escalate pressure on the Albanian leadership to demonstrate leadership in this next critical phase of the status process. End comment.

¶13. (U) DAS DiCarlo has cleared on this message.

¶14. (U) U.S. Office Pristina clears this cable for release in its entirety to U.N. Special Envoy for Kosovo Martti Ahtisaari.
KAIDANOW